

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MC-02 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-04

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3053

INFO CINCPAC

COMUSMACTHAI

SECDEF

JCS

CSAF

GSA

CNO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 22164

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TH

SUBJ: AMMUNITION IN THAILAND

REF: STATE 247618

1. PENDING FINAL WASHINGTON DECISIONS, INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS NECESSARILY ARE CONTINUING FOR STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE OF US-TITLED AMMUNITION STOCKS UNDER PROGRAM KNOWN AS AMMUNITION IN THAILAND (AIT). A MAJORITY OF U.S. ARMY AND NAVY AIT STOCKS HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO STORAGE FACILITIES AT KORAT. THE BALANCE IS AT VAYAMA AMMO DEPOT AWAITING KORAT STORAGE AVAILABILITY. THE AIR FORCE STOCKS FROM NKP HAVE BEEN MOVED TO KORAT. THE THAI HAVE NOT YET ASSUMED STORAGE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE AMMO.

2. AT TIME PROGRAM WAS FIRST PROPOSED TO WASHINGTON, DEPARTMENT (IN STATE 133610, JUNE 7, 1975), SIGNALLED LEGAL DIFFICULTIES THAT REMAINED TO BE RESOLVED. WE HAVE HAD NO WORD FROM DEPARTMENT ON NATURE OF THESE DIFFICULTIES, BUT IN THE MEANTIME, ON BASIS OF A RECENT VISIT BY  
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OMB'S JOHN EISENHOUR, WE UNDERSTAND PROBLEM RESIDES IN SECTION

514 OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT WHICH CAN BE INTERPRETED AS PRE-  
CLUDING RETENTION OF AMMO STOCKS IN THAILAND FOR INDEFINITE  
PERIOD. WE NOTE ALSO THAT IN CERTAIN RECENT MILITARY  
TRAFFIC (E.G., CINCPAC MESSAGE DTG 151833Z OCT 75) RE-  
TENTION OF AMMUNITION IN THAILAND IS CHARACTERIZED  
AS TEMPORARY.

3. IN LIGHT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS, WE ARE CONCERNED  
THAT AIT AMMO, RATHE  
THAN BEING RETAINED INDEFINITELY  
IN THAILAND, IS SIMPLY BEING DROPPED TO END OF THE  
RETROGRADE LINE MARCHING TOWARD THE PORT AND WILL HAVE  
TO BE REMOVED IN DUE COURSE AS PART OF THE OVERALL RETRO-  
GRADE, MOST OF WHICH WILL BE COMPLETED BY THE SPRING  
OF 1976. IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE THAI REGARD AIT  
AS A LONG-TERM ARRANGEMENT MAKING A VITAL CONTRIBUTION  
TO THEIR ABILITY TO STAND OFF EXTERNAL THREATS, WE WOULD  
EXPECT THEM TO REACT VERY STRONGLY AGAINST EARLY RETRO-  
GRADE OF AIT AMMO. THEY WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY CONCLUDE THAT  
WE HAD TRICKED THEM WITH AN INSINCERE OFFER IN ORDER TO  
GAIN THEIR COOPERATION IN OVERALL RETROGRADE OPERATIONS.

4. AIT PROGRAM WAS ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED AS SERVING  
SEVERAL PURPOSES. MAIN PURPOSE WAS TO PROVIDE TANGIBLE  
EVIDENCE TO RTG OF OUR CONTINUING INTEREST IN THAI SECURITY  
IN ORDER TO STIFFEN RTG'S BACKBONE AS IT WORKS ITS WAY  
INTO NEW RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM, CAMBODIA AND LAOS. SINCE  
COMPOSITION OF AMMO STORES IS TAILORED TO THAI  
NEEDS, THERE IS, OF COURSE, PRESUMPTION THAT IT WOULD BE  
MADE AVAILABLE TO THAI ARMED FORCES IF THAILAND WERE  
ATTACKED. THIS GIVES SUBSTANCE TO OUR REPEATED ASSURANCES  
TO RTG THAT WE WILL ABIDE BY OUR COMMITMENTS RATHER THAN CAST  
THAILAND ASIDE NOW THAT WE NO LONGER NEED ITS SUPPORT IN FIGHTING  
AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS IN INDOCHINA#

5. FROM THIS DISTANCE, WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO  
JUDGE HOW SERIOUS THE LEGAL DIFFICULTIES ARE OR HOW THEY  
MIGHT BE RESOLVED.  
BUT WE URGE THAT EVERY EFFORT BE MADE  
TO PRODUCE A SOLUTION THAT WILL ENABLE THE AIT PROGRAM  
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TO CONTINUE AFTER THE COMPLETION OF RETROGRADE OPERATIONS  
AND FOR THE INDEFINITE FUTURE. THE PRESENCE OF THESE  
STOCKS IN THAILAND, US-TITLED BUT IN THE CUSTODY OF THE  
THAI, COULD BE A MAJOR FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO GOOD FUTURE  
US-THAI RELATIONS, BOLSTERING THAI SECURITY AT NO RISK  
TO THE U.S. IT WOULD THUS ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO THE VIABILITY OF  
THE RESIDUAL US PRESENCE HERE.  
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## Message Attributes

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